FAMOUS LOVES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

By ROBERT STEPHENS.

Laggard in His Courtship of Belinda Burwell, Who Refused Him, Thomas Jefferson Forgot His Settled Habits and Wooed and Won the Beautiful Martha Skelton in a Few Weeks—Their Weird Honeymoon and Perfect Love

IF ever a man had a weird honeymoon it was Thomas Jefferson. Out of the great front door of "The Forest," the home of his bride, he stepped with Martha Skelton on his arm on New Year's Day of 1772. There had been such a wedding as Charles City county had not had in years. The gentry of the lowlands had gathered for many miles around and there had been singing and dancing, feasting and merrymaking, toasting and rejoicing all through the day.

The rice with which Jefferson and his bride were showered as they raced from the door to their coach made little impression on them, for snow was falling.

Down the broad avenue from "The Forest" went the coach and then turned to the road that led to the west. Night was near and the horses made slow progress. The driver had to pick his way, and every hour his task became more difficult, for the snow became heavier and heavier and the horses sank deeper into the drifts as they labored along.

It is a hundred miles from "The Forest," in the lowlands, to Monticello, in the hill country, as the crow flies. By the winding roads and the mountain paths that coach followed the distance is much longer. Not in a generation had Virginia known such a snowstorm as the one that started on Jefferson's wedding day.

Occasionally, as they came to a great estate, Jefferson and his wife were urged to stop, but they were loath to do so, for they knew a large company had assembled at Monticello to welcome them, so Jefferson would take only a fresh pair of horses and push on.

The further they proceeded the worse were the roads. Frequently they were stalled by the drifts, and the bridegroom and the driver had to dig their way out. When the snow was so deep that the horses could not make headway with the loaded coach Jefferson carried his bride to some sheltered spot and then aided in bringing the coach up. Day and night they journeyed on. The hardest part of the trip was the last eight miles from Blenheim to Monticello. To make better time they followed a mountain trail.

When they reached Monticello it was late at night. The gay company had departed the day before. The house was dark. All the slaves were in their quarters asleep. Having no idea that they would see their master and mistress for days, they had allowed the fire to go out.

Into the cold, dark, dreary mansion Jefferson led his bride. After lighting the candles Jefferson built a great fire. Then he and Mrs. Jefferson brewed coffee and made a raid on the pantry for some good things to eat. Warmed by the coffee and refreshed by what they ate, Jefferson took up his beloved violin, and while he played his wife, who had one of the sweetest voices of any woman in Virginia, sang some of the sweet songs of long ago. So it was that Thomas Jefferson and Martha Skelton celebrated their arrival home.

Jefferson was 29; his wife 23. He was 6 feet 2, thin but powerful, and already had made a name for himself as a fine lawyer and a man of wonderful versatility. His wife was a trifle above medium height, beautiful in face, charming of figure, queenly in carriage and highly educated.

Rarely were husband and wife more suited. Both loved to read; both were industrious and methodical. She was a fine housekeeper, generous, hospitable and the soul of good nature, yet she never wasted anything. She kept account of every branch of her stewardship and her books are models of household bookkeeping.

He was patient, studious and just. There hardly was a subject in all the realm of knowledge he had not an acquaintance with. As an architect he might have made a name for himself as one of the greatest of his age; as an astronomer he held high rank; as a lawyer there were few who were superior to him; as a farmer he was the foremost in America, and as a mechanic there practically was nothing from shoeing a horse, making a stage coach or fashioning a flour mill that he could not do as well as a master craftsman.

Yet with all his gifts he was one of the silliest of lovers.

Great men are not immune from folly where the tender passion is concerned, but a good angel must have guarded Jefferson in the years when he was on the matrimonial bargain counter.

Martha Skelton was not his first love. There were half a dozen, perhaps, before her. The names of some of them were queer enough to sour the desires of any but a particularly ardent youth. There was a time when Jefferson thought that Sukey Potter was the only girl in the world for him.

Some of the letters he wrote to her and about her do credit to him as a courageous young man, but not otherwise. Then he paid court to Judy Burwell and rhapsodized over her as only a callow youth can who has a command of language and a feeling which he thinks is love. After Judy came Belinda Burwell, sister of Judy, to whom Jefferson transferred his attentions when Judy proved inconstant. If Belinda had had less spirit she might have been Mrs. Jefferson, but the publicity of his courtship was too much for her.

The honeymoon trip of Thomas Jefferson and his bride was made in the worst snowstorm Virginia had known in years.

With Belinda Jefferson adopted the tactics of Miles Standish, and with no more success. He felt sure that he loved her, and he suspected but was not quite sure that she loved him. He was making fine progress at the law and was building up his estate to a point where it gave promise of being a great property, but to improve his mind he desired to go abroad for two or three years of study and travel.

To embark on the sea of matrimony at such a time was perilous financially, for Belinda would bring nothing to him but her beautiful self. He thought the matter out in the calm of his evenings and then he decided upon a plan.

He thought the proposal he meant to make might startle her if her mind were not prepared in advance, so he besought his friend Page, him who afterward was a Governor of Virginia, to acquaint her with his notion about going to Europe, enlighten her about the great love he had for her and ascertain, if possible, if her affection was strong enough to bind her for the period of his absence.

Girls have been girls since the beginning of time. Mr. Page did what he could to tempt Belinda to confess that she loved Jefferson enough to wait for him forever, but Belinda, despite his adroit questioning, left Page as much in the dark about the state of her mind as he had been before their interview.

Jefferson, hopeful but timorous, then availed himself of a favorable opportunity to put the case before her as best he could. He explained how necessary it was for him to make the trip to foreign lands; how he could not afford to marry just then; how sure he was that he loved her; how he might be gone two years or perhaps more.

He was confident that absence would not cool his affection, but he could not openly commit himself to proposing marriage just then. He felt sure that, if she waited for him, he could formally propose marriage when he returned, and it would bring great happiness into his life if he could go away with the knowledge that he had her love.

Women will forgive much, but never lack of ardor in a courtship. Belinda Burwell might, as Belinda Jefferson, have her name inscribed in the roster of the wives of great men, but to her credit be it said that she merely is to be enrolled among those who gave the mitten to a great man. She had the spirit to tell Mr. Jefferson that he was not the sort of a husband she desired. And then, to make him miserable, she married some one else.

Jefferson did not make the trip abroad he had in contemplation. He poured out his sorrows in letters to his friend Page. His pride was hurt, and he felt a bit of resentment at the fair Belinda, but his correspondence at that time will bring no tears to the eyes of even the sentimental.

Laggard he was in all his love affairs until he met Martha Skelton. Then he roused himself to a spirit that any woman would be flattered to know she was responsible for. Two years of bachelorhood he had after Belinda sent him away, two years in which he did great work in the beautification of Monticello and in the cause of the oppressed colonies.

Then, through one of the law cases in which he was engaged, he happened to be invited to visit The Forest, where John Wayle, a wealthy lawyer, had his estate. There he met Martha Skelton. She was Wayle's daughter. She had been married to a rich young planter and, within a year or so of her marriage, had been left a widow.

Rich, beautiful and talented, she had scores of suitors. Jefferson did not delegate his love making in this instance to another. He never was much of a dancer, never much of a ladies' man, but from the moment he met her no one was more devoted to Martha Skelton. Ordinarily he was deliberate. In this particular case of love making he broke away from his settled habits. Within a few weeks of meeting her he had proposed marriage. Then he insisted upon an early marriage. She demurred, but he had his way. And neither of them ever had reason to regret it.

Thomas Jefferson.

The home into which Thomas Jefferson took his bride was as near a paradise as there was in the Western world. He had an estate of several thousand acres. With the money his wife brought to him he bought more land until he had a property of nearly 7,000 acres.

He had more than a hundred slaves, but the slaves of Thomas Jefferson were to be envied, not to be pitied. Never was there a kinder master. The ache or the pain of the humblest black was as much his concern as his own physical suffering. He cared for them as if they were his children, and they loved him as children love a father.

The troubles that brought on the Revolution were stirring the hearts of men. Jefferson was beginning to show some of the force with which he acted in later days. There were few conventions of Virginians to which he was not called as a delegate, but with all the turmoil of the times he found opportunity to carry out the plans he had for the development of Monticello. The name he gave to his home means Little Mountain.

To make his place distinctive he marked its boundaries by cutting its lines out of living rock of the hills. With a love for the soil such as few men had, he studied every detail of his estate with exquisite care, not only from the point of utility and profit but from the viewpoint of beauty. Such corn and wheat as he raised flourished in no other part of Virginia.

Between Jefferson and his wife there was the most perfect of love. She thought he was the most remarkable of men, and he thought she was a paragon among women. Monticello she would have considered paradise were it not for the fact that each succeeding year found it necessary for her husband to absent himself more and more from home.

The Revolution was gaining force with the seasons. Monticello was the gathering point for the patriot leaders of the hill counties. Jefferson, who had been busy enough in Virginia affairs, now was called to Philadelphia and to New York. His absence preyed heavily upon the mind of his wife. The care of the whole estate devolved upon her and her health was breaking down. Children had been born to her rather rapidly. Two of them had died, and her grief had been increased by the belief that if her wonderful husband had been home he, by his knowledge of medicine, might have saved the life of one of them.

What did it matter if his name was becoming one of the great ones of the land? What did it signify if to him was given the credit of writing the Declaration which had just been adopted at Philadelphia by which the Colonies declared themselves free of the mother country? A mother in her grief thinks most of her young. Mrs. Jefferson's prayer was that there should be peace in the land so that her little world of Monticello should know the serenity and calm of former years.

Ill, harassed by her worries and torturing herself with all sorts of fears as to his safety, Mrs. Jefferson pleaded with her husband to give up public life so soon as his term of office expired. Jefferson loved politics, but he loved his wife more, and to please her he retired from public life.

She had become a hopeless invalid. He became her nurse. Then she was happy.

For nearly two years they were inseparable. Those were two years of such peace and calm and joy to Mrs. Jefferson as rarely are known to women. All that time Mrs. Jefferson was sinking generally. In 1782 she died. Her last words were a request that he should not marry again. He gave his pledge that he would obey her wish.

When she died the great, strong man, who never before had been known to lose control of himself, fell in a swoon. He was unconscious for a long time and then he became ill. For a month he would see no one. All his philosophy and his mastery of himself seemed to have deserted him in this time of his supreme sorrow.

Jefferson was less than 40 when Mrs. Jefferson died. Cornwallis had surrendered and the Revolution was in its last stage when he was aroused from his lethargy. His friends besought him to busy himself with public affairs, as much to take his mind off his grief as to serve the public interest.

He lived for nearly half a century after the death of his wife. Honors and glories came to him as have been the portion of but few men. When he died it was at his beloved Monticello, and by an extraordinary coincidence he passed beyond exactly fifty years to the day from the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which he drafted and which has been classed as the greatest document from the pen of man for the government of man.

He was a great commoner as he lived, and a great commoner as he died. He wrote his own epitaph. It simply credits him with his name, his authorship of the Declaration of Independence and the fact that he gave religious liberty to the people of Virginia. He might have added his holding of the office of President, but that he would have thought a vanity. And he might have recorded the fact that he was the first great American to advocate the abolition of slavery. And he might, too, have set down the fact that, great statesman though he was, he never made a speech.

Are You in Love? Read What German Philosophers and an Austrian Poet Say About It

FOUR German philosophers and an Austrian writer have lately been trying to analyze love in a scientific manner and the books and papers they have published on the results of their researches have given rise to a good deal of discussion. All of them discuss the subject from a serious standpoint.

Literary Austria and Germany have been set talking by a book on "The Three Stages of Erotics," which is the work of the Viennese poet-philosopher, Dr. Emil Lucka. It presents a historical and philosophical account of the development of the passion of love. It has especially aroused controversy because Dr. Lucka's conclusion that only the Germanic race, including the British and North American people, is capable of the highest love.

Dr. Lucka's main thesis is that genuine love is something entirely modern. He shows that love among barbarous races and among the civilized races of antiquity was always purely a matter of the senses. In ancient Greece that which is now called platonic love did not exist, not even as an ideal, for platonic love was not love of woman at all, but merely love of an ideal. The Greek development did not produce love in the modern sense. It produced an entirely idealizing love. It came in with the Troubadours. The idealizing love of the Troubadours failed because it did not aim at union with the beloved; it became purely metaphysical. This idealizing love was prominent in the age of Dante and of the Renaissance. The blending of the two types of love was first accomplished until the eighteenth century. And it is not everywhere accomplished yet. Only certain of the most developed races have attained it, and outside the Germanic races is practically unknown.

All this argument relates to men. Dr. Lucka makes the declaration that in woman love has undergone no such development. Women missed the development because they did not need it. From the beginning of time the love of woman realized the perfect synthesis of the physical and the ideal, which man has attained only after thousands of years of striving.

Of the German philosophers Dr. Lehmann says that love is a return to nature, that it is nothing but a "psychological reminiscence" from the age when unicellular organisms possessed an otherwise desert earth. The later multicellular organisms, including man himself, were produced by the splitting up of the unicellular organisms; this process is still going on and in its earlier stages may be seen under the microscope.

Dr. Lehmann holds that love is only the desire inherited from these first divided organisms to return to the state of union in which they were created. The instinct to return to the primal state is a law of nature. "Every action is accompanied by the trend toward a reaction against itself." The once united unicellular organism, which is man's ancestor, divided in two reluctantly as result of a stress toward the differentiation without which there would be no progress. But its primal instinct to be a unicellular organism remains and it is always trying to realize this. The attraction of men and women for each other which is called love is nothing but this stress toward reunion, modified by various conditions.

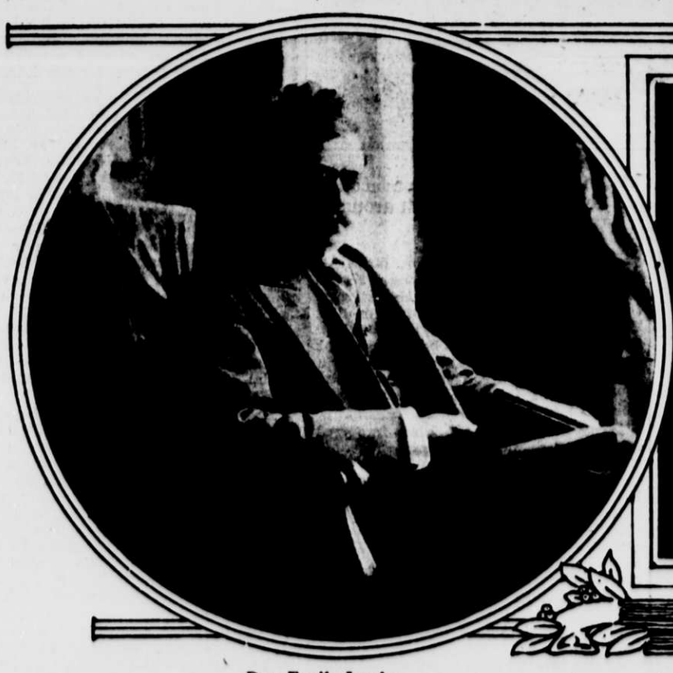
Dr. Georg Mehlis points out in the journal *Logos* that the ancient Greeks knew the theory that love is the trend toward reunion of two elements separated by fate. This is clearly expressed by the comic poet Aristophanes. Dr. Mehlis, however, finds that it is a mistake to look on love as a single positive principle. Love contains two opposite principles according to whether the lovers are sound human beings or not. When they are unsound, love is an evil. All the wickedness and misery of the universe come from unsound love.

A third philosopher, Dr. Nolken, says that people now love more ardently, but find less mutuality than at any other time in man's development. This will become worse until humanity perishes of unsatisfied love. Love, nevertheless, remains a high principle in nature. Here Dr. Nolken agrees with the German philosopher Edward von Hardtmann, who holds that love is a divine and saving thing in the world, but that in the life of individuals it is a cause of misery.

Dr. Nolken explains the decline in mutuality by saying that the tendency toward differentiation which first caused the sexes is becoming stronger every day; man is becoming less like woman; and man and woman find it harder to discover their affinities. At the same time the other and contrary trend toward reunion has not grown weaker.

In the future the number of love seekers will increase, but the number of love finders will dwindle. Dr. Nolken sees in this a danger to the future of humanity. It means a fall in the marriage rate, an increase of bachelors and old maids. This effect is primarily the result of the march of the ages; but it is intensified by civilization. That is why civilized countries have more unmarried persons than uncivilized.

It may be said in conclusion that two of the philosophers are elderly bachelors.



Dr. Emil Lucka.

Dr. Georg Mehlis.

Dr. Lehmann, German philosopher.